A Humble

ENDEAVOUR

Of ſome Plain and Brief

EXPLICATION

OF THE

Decrees and Operations of God,

About the

FREE ACTIONS of MEN:

More Eſpecially

Of the Operations of DIVINE GRACE.

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THE PREFACE.

THe things here diſcuſſed I have ſtudied many years; and what, by the Writings of Learned Men, and by diſcourſing with them, and by my own ratiocination, grounded on the Holy Scripture, I have apprehended neareſt the Truth, which I have been feeling after, I have collected in this narrow Scantling. I have been led into this ſearch, not out of vain Curioſity, but an honeſt Deſire to gain as clear a Knowledge in theſe Points, as I can reach to, that I might be able with more aſſurance to unfold the ſame to others, as far as is requiſite for their Edification.

Though the Counſels and Wayes of God cannot be found out unto Perfection, yet the Light of Scripture and Nature leads us to think and ſpeak of them ſo as is moſt agreeable to his Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and ſo as his Juſtice and Truth may be cleared, and the freeneſs and largeneſs of his Mercy magnified, and that the glorious Power of his Grace, and the deplorable weakneſs of Fallen Man, may be acknowledged, and that penitent Sinners may be ſufficiently incouraged, and that the impenitent may be evidently ſelf-condemned.

That which is ſet down in this Enquiry, is moſtly in order to the clearing and confirming of the Principles here following.

1. *The help of Divine Grace is the prime and main Cauſe of all the Good that dwells in us, and that is done by us: But our own Wills are the main Cauſe of the Evil that is done by us, and of our abiding in that Evil State into which our Nature is fallen, and God is no Cauſe thereof at all.*

2. *God doth decree to bring ſome to Salvation by his Free Grace and Love: And he doth not decree to damn any, but for ſin, as the Cauſe of their damnation; which ſin he doth not decree, nor effect, but foreſee.*

3. *God doth aſcertain the Converſion and Salvation of his Elect; but he doth not effect it without their own concurrence in a ſubordinate way. I ſpeak of thoſe that attain to the uſe of Reaſon, not of Infants, Ideots, and Mad-men, whoſe Caſe is of different and peculiar nature.*

4. *Though Election doth infer a Certainty that the Elect ſhall attain to Grace and Glory; yet Non-election doth infer no Neceſſity of the ſin and damnation of the Non-elect, ſave only that which is called* Neceſſitas conſequentiæ, *or Neceſſity in order of Argumentation, and is Neceſſity but improperly ſo called, and implies no Neceſſitation of the Event.*

5. *Though God doth not ſimply will the Event of the Converſion and Salvation of all, to whom the Goſpel is made known; yet he wills it ſo far, and in ſuch manner, as doth abundantly declare his good will towards men; and doth aſſure the diligent of good ſucceſs in their indeavours; and doth convict the negligent of being inexcuſable deſpiſers of his Grace towards them.*

6. *God hath given us all ſome help of grace, more or leſs, in order to our Spiritual Recovery. The ſaid help may be improved by us to the obtaining of more, And it is not Gods ordinary way to deny more help, or to withdraw what is given, but upon the abuſe of what is given, and the reſiſting of what is offered, and for our not doing not only what we ought, but what we might do.*

According to theſe Principles I have proceeded. My indeavour hath been accompanied with a ſenſe of my own great defectiveneſs in the Knowledge of theſe things: But I have done, as I was able, and am willing to know wherein ſoever I have erred. The perfect clearing of all things and the ſolving of all doubts in theſe Myſterious Points may be above the reach of mortal men. The great Apoſtle ſaid, We know but in part. *But Truths of the greateſt Moment and Evidence may not be disbelieved or doubted of, becauſe we cannot ſolve all Difficulties about leſſer and o'ſcurer Queſtions relating to thoſe grand Truths.*

PART.

PART I.

Of the Decrees of God about the Actions of Men.

1. *What the Divine Decree of an Event doth import.*

TO Decree a Thing, is to will and purpoſe its coming to paſs; and it ſuppoſeth that the Thing is judged Convenient. If it be a ſure Decree, it implies that the Decreer can and will ſo provide, that it ſhall infallibly come to paſs.

Gods Decree of an Event, is a willing and purpoſing of it as Convenient. Its Convenience he knows by the knowledg of ſimple intelligence; and being decreed, he knows it as a Future Convenient, by the knowledg of Viſion, and is pleaſed with it.

As Gods Efficience is concern'd in the Event decreed, the Decree of the Event includes the Decree of the ſaid Efficience. That whatſoever God doth in time, he hath eternally decreed to do, I ſuppoſe is unqueſtionable. And for as much as no Humane Act comes to paſs without his concurſe, he hath undoubtedly decreed the concurſe that he yields to it. And there is the ſame reaſon of the Decree of whatſoever on Gods part is antecedently neceſſary, as the giving of all Neceſſary Power, Preparatives, Means, Concauſes, Objects, all which are unqueſtionably decreed of God.

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2. *The Divine Decree doth not infer the Neceſſitation of the Event.*

THough the Exiſtence of the Event depends upon Gods Efficience, yet ſomething thereof he may put under the Creatures undetermined Liberty. Under this Liberty he may put the comparative determination of the Will to act rather than not to act, and to act towards ſuch an Object rather than another. Surely it is too high preſumption for man to ſay, that God cannot Decree or firmly Will that humane act, which is in part ſuſpended on mans Will; for inſtance, to ſay God could not decree *Adam's* Perſeverance in the ſtate of Innocence, if it were in any part left to his own liberty to ſtand or fall.

Now if ſuch an Aſſertion be an apparently preſumptuous limitation of God, beſides other great inconveniences to be objected againſt it, then it may more ſafely and rationally be held, that Gods Decree of a humane act is very agreeable to the leaving of it in ſome part to the undetermined liberty of mans will, though to unfold the Agreement be very difficult to humane Underſtanding. In ſhort, though the Decree cannot conſiſt with the contrary Event, yet it may conſiſt with the poſſibility of the contrary, and ſo it doth not in it ſelf infer a Neceſſitation of the thing decreed.

3. *The Negation of the Decree doth not infer an impoſſibility of the Event.*

GOd's Decree is not neceſſary to an Event, by way of cauſation; Conſequently the negation of the Decree, is not a negation of what is cauſally neceſſary thereunto; and ſo it doth not infer an impoſſibility thereof. As for Example, the Negation of Gods Decree of the Perſevering Obedience of ſome Angels, was not a negation of what was cauſally neceſſary thereunto, for then their Perſeverance had been impoſſible, which a ſober judgment will not admit. The non-exiſtence of a thing not decreed, follows the negation of the Decree, only by a neceſſity of logical illation, but not of cauſal deficiency, or by a negation of any neceſſary Cauſe.

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There is a Power properly ſo called, or an adequate Power to an act, whereſoever there is all the neceſſary cauſality of the firſt Cauſe, alſo the Object and its neceſſary Poſition, and the Capacity and neceſſary Prediſpoſition of the Subject, and an aptitude of the Natural Powers, and the neceſſary concurrence of all Concauſes. And all theſe neceſſary Antecedents to an Act may, and commonly do meet, where there is no Divine Decree of the Act, as is undeniable in the Caſe of the lapſed Angels, whoſe Perſeverance was fully Poſſible, yet certainly not Future.

As Man hath a power to do that which God foreknows he will not do, ſo he hath a Power to do that, which God hath not decreed that he ſhall do.

As it is rightly ſaid, that it Cannot come to paſs that any Good will exiſt without the Divine Decree; ſo it is as rightly ſaid, that it Cannot come to paſs that any Good will exiſt without the Divine Preſcience. But the Cannot in both Inſtances is in reſpect of Illation, not of Cauſation.

4. *The indetermination of Mans Will doth not infer the Uncertainty of God's Decree.*

A Thing may be certainly Future that is under the undetermined liberty of the Will. Mans Power and Liberty of doing otherwiſe than God hath decreed, doth no more infer a poſſibility of the fruſtration of his Decrees, than his Power and Liberty of doing otherwiſe, than God hath foreknown he will do, doth infer an uncertainty of Gods foreknowledg. Now it is undeniable, that God can certainly foreknow, that a man will do that which he hath power not to do; and that he will not do that which he hath power to do. *Adam* had power to reſiſt the Temptation, which God foreknew he would yield to.

The Power it ſelf to do otherwiſe than as God hath decreed, is foreknown and decreed; and it is alſo foreknown and decreed, That the ſaid Power ſhall not do otherwiſe. God's Decree is according to his Foreknowledg, which is to us incomprehenſible.

5. God decrees all the Good that comes to pass.

IT is the perfection of God, as God, to be the Author of all Good as well Moral as Phyſical, as well of common as of ſaving Grace. And to be the Author of it, is to decree and procure that it be done.

As it is the perfection of the Divine Intellect to underſtand all that is Intelligible; ſo it is the perfection of the Divine Will to chuſe all that is eligible, or fitteſt to be choſen to come to paſs.

It is agreeable to the perfection of Gods Providence, that all the Good that is done in the World, ſhould be decreed, and infallibly brought to paſs by him.

As undoubtedly God doth effect every good Act that comes to paſs, ſo undoubtedly he doth decree it. For whatſoever is the Object of Divine Operation is alſo the Object of Divine Volition.

Every good Act is an End, or a Means to an End, in the Courſe of Gods Providence; and therefore it is decreed of him. All the Ends of Providence are determined, and conſequently the Meanes to be made uſe of for the ſame are likewiſe determined.

Though I do not affirm, that Gods Foreknowledg and Decree are of equal extent, yet it ſeems not congruous that his Foreknowledg ſhould be active, and his Purpoſe or Will not active to any Future Good.

Gods Foreknowledg of Evil infers, though not a Decree of it, yet a Decree about it, that it ſhall be ſo and ſo diſpoſed of for good; ſo that by thoſe, who do what he willeth not, he accompliſheth what he willeth.

6. God doth not Will or Decree Sin.

IT muſt needs be held that whatſoever God doth, he wills to do; and whatſoever is the Effect of his agency, he wills the ſame. Conſequently, whatſoever he doth about a ſinful Act, he wills to do it; and whatſoever is the Effect of his Agency

Agency about the said Act, he wills the same. Now there is a concurse of God, as the Universal Cause, to every Act, and therefore to every sinful Act as an Act; that is, to so much as is in the general Nature of the said act. And so much as this comes to, he wills, which is not Sin, but only the *Subſtratum Peccati.*

But as he doth not concur to the sinful Act, as it is this Act in *ſpecie*, and not the contrary; so he doth not Will and Decree the Act, as such in *ſpecie*. How the Divine concurse is yielded to sinful actions, shall be explained in its proper place, under the Head of Gods Efficience.

God Permitteth Sin. But to Permit Sin is not to Will it, but only not to Prevent its coming to pass.

God doth not Will the Essence, therefore he doth not Will the Event or Existence of sin. For the Existence of sin is but its Essence *extra cauſas*, or in actual being. To say that God doth not Will the Essence of sin, but that the Essence thereof exist, is very odd, and to me unintelligible. The Event or Existence of Sin is the Object of Gods Hatred, therefore it cannot be the Object of his Will. For he doth not Will what he hates.

If God willeth the Existence of Sin, he willeth the committing of it; and if he willeth the committing of sin, then the committing of Sin is the fullfilling of his Will; and if it be the fullfilling of his Will, it is the Object of his Complacence, and then he hath Complacence in the Violation of his Law.

Sin hath no Good in it, and it works no good. 'Tis not sin, but the feeling knowledg of sin, that works Humiliation and repentance.

It is to be noted, That God doth not Will whatsoever he doth not Nill. Between Volition and Nolition there is a middle thing, *viz.* Non-volition.

Though God doth not simply Nill the Existence of sin, yet he Nills it so far, as that he hates it, and severely forbids it, and gives Necessary Power to avoid it.

7. *There is no need of holding that Sin is decreed of God.*

IF the aforeſaid Arguments be not ſtrong enough to prove, That God doth not decree Sin; yet there is no need for any one, in order to the ſalving of Gods Providence; to hold that he doth decree it.

The Exiſtence of Sin, foreſeen indeed, but not decreed, God makes advantage of for his Holy Ends, it being under his Ruling Power. He Wills the Good occaſioned by Sin, but he Wills not Sin as the occaſion of Good. All the Good that follows Sin (not as the End follows the Means, but as health follows the diſeaſe) is decreed of God.

Seeing God over-rules all the Inclinations and Actions of his Creatures, his not decreeing of Sin doth not at all leſſen his Providence about ſinful Actions.

8. *A Decree to permit Sin is not neceſſary.*

TO Permit, is not to Act, and not to Act is nothing; and of nothing there is no Decree, at leaſt there is no need of a Decree. No more is needful to a Not-being, than Gods not Willing and not Effecting. Conſequently, there is no Decree of the Permiſſion of Sin, at leaſt, there is no neceſſity of holding ſuch a Decree.

It may be Objected, That a *Non-eſſe* is the Object of Gods Will, when he wills that ſome Evil Action ſhall not come to paſs. The anſwer is, That in ſuch a caſe the thing that God properly wills, is his reſtraining and limiting of mens evil Inclinations and Actions, and the *Non-eſſe* of thoſe Actions is ſaid to be willed by him, but improperly and reductively, as being the Conſequent of that which he properly Wills. And his Will is further terminated on the good Conſequence of his preventing the ſaid Evil Actions.

It may be likewiſe objected, If a man may rightly ſay, I will or Purpoſe to permit, why may not God rightly ſay ſo? The anſwer is, that when a man makes ſuch a Determination, it commonly means a Purpoſe of reſtraining the Inclination

Inclination or Will, that is or may be in him, to hinder the thing; and the ſaid Purpoſe is further terminated on the Conſequents of the Permiſſion, and the ordering of them. So God may be ſaid to Will, or Purpoſe a Permiſſion, as he wills or purpoſeth the limiting of his reſtraining Agency, and as this Will and Purpoſe is alſo terminated on the Conſequents of the thing permitted, and the diſpoſal thereof by his Providence.

9. *The Effect of Sin may be the Object of Gods Decree.*

THough God decree no mans ſin, yet he may decree the Effect which ſinners cauſe by ſin. So God decreed the death of Chriſt, and the paſſive conſtupration of *David's* Concubines, but he decreed not the ſin of the Actors. Accordingly ſuch places of holy Scripture, as ſeem to import Gods Willing the ſins of men, do indeed ſignifie no more than the Effects of their ſins as willed by him.

Though ſin hath no Good in it, and works nothing Good in it ſelf, and cannot be willed of God as a thing convenient, or conducible; yet it may be an occaſion of the greateſt Good, and it may work an Effect, which, though bad in it ſelf, (I mean Phylically bad) may be conducible to Good, and ſo far the Effect may be willed as convenient.

If it be objected, That a Decree of the Effect (one would think) doth imply a Decree of the Cauſe. The anſwer is, 1. That the meer decreeing of a thing, includes no more than a willing that it ſhall be, joyned with a Knowledg of its convenience. And ſo a Decree of the Effect of ſin, doth imply a Foreknowledg of the conducibility of that Effect to ſome Good; yet it no way implyes a Decree of the ſin, but only a Foreknowledg of it. 2. Though God doth not Decree mans ſin, yet he decrees his own concurſe to the Act in its general nature, but not as morally ſpecified. He decrees alſo the diſpoſing and ordering of all Concauſes and neceſſary Antecedents of the Effect, which ſinners accompliſh. And this, with his Foreknowledg of the ſin it ſelf, ſufficeth to a Decree of ſuch an Effect

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10. *Of the Futurition of Sin from Eternity.*

That the Futurition of ſin is from Eternity, is no Argument that Gods Decree is the Cauſe thereof. For Futurition in not a real Being diſtinct from the thing future, but it is meerly a reſpect of reaſon or conception of the mind about it; and it requires no diſtinct Cauſe from the Future thing it ſelf. No real Being is Eternal, but God, and Eternal Futurition is but *ens rationis*; and an extrinſick denomination of the Divine Mind as conceiving it.

The Cauſe whereby a thing doth exiſt in Time, is the Cauſe whereby it was Eternally Future; though the Cauſe did not exiſt from Eternity; as the Cauſe, whereby a thing ſometime was, is the Cauſe why it ſhall be a thing paſt even to Eternity, though that Cauſe do not exiſt to Eternity.

11. *Of Gods Eternal Preſcience of Sin.*

God doth Foreſee whatſoever is Future, and of determinate verity, by the meer Infinity and Eternity of his Underſtanding. And no other Cauſe is to be ſuppoſed neceſſary to his Foreknowledg of ſin.

That there can be no Futurity, of a determinate Verity, the Cauſes whereof are undeterminate, muſt be proved by the Aſſerters thereof. That a thing will be, ſufficeth to the truth of its Futurity, without conſideration from what Cauſe it will be. And who can ſay that Futurity is not by it ſelf intelligible, or that God cannot Foreknow what a Creature, acting freely and contingently, will do? Let it be noted, that the thing under conſideration is, what the Infinity of the Divine Underſtanding can reach unto.

12. *In what Senſe Benefics are abſolutely decreed of God.*

In whatſoever Order God doth bring any thing to paſs in Time, he decreed from Eternity to bring it to paſs in the very ſame Order.

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There be Conditions or use of Means requisite to the bringing to pass of that Good which is decreed; and God willeth also, that those Conditions shall be performed, and those Means used; and so in the issue he absolutely willeth all those Benefits that come to pass.

That which God doth not, but upon Conditions, he absolutely Decreed to do, and he absolutely Decreed to do it upon such Conditions. So that the Decree is absolute, though the thing Decreed be Conditional.

13. *Punishments are not alike absolutely Decreed, yet in some sense absolutely.*

THough the Favours and Benefits, that are given conditionally, be absolutely decreed, because the giving of the Conditions is decreed also; yet the Punishments, that are inflicted, are not alike absolutely decreed; because the sins, which are the Condition, or the Meritorious Cause thereof, are not decreed. But in regard of Gods certain Foreknowledg of those sins, which merit the decreed Punishments, the Decree thereof doth not hang in suspence, and it may be rightly said, that the Punishments are so far absolutely decreed.

He that certainly foresees the Condition of the decreed Event, absolutely willeth it, though he willeth not the Condition. And so God's Omniscience proves that he hath at no instant a will properly Conditional, that is, suspended upon a Condition, as to the Act it self, though the Event decreed be so suspended.

14. *Of the diversity and order of Gods Decrees.*

ALl the Decrees of God are one, as in him; but they have a formal diversity in respect of the Objects and Effects, in which regard we must necessarily think and speak of them as divers.

According to this diversity Predestination includes divers Decrees, among which these are notable, *viz.* a Decree of

of Redemption, a Decree of the first Saving Grace, or Conversion, a Decree of Perseverance, and a Decree of Glory.

All the Decrees of God are executed in a certain Order, the Design whereof was eternally included in the very Decrees. And the Order of the Decrees, as to our apprehension of them, is most safely and conveniently laid down according to the order of their Execution. But to insist upon a Priority and Posteriority of Intention in the Divine Intellect and Will, is found lubricous and incommodious, and it is no way necessary.

15. *Divers Decrees have diversly qualified Objects.*

IN the Divine Decrees, diversified from their Objects, the Objects are considered as diverlly qualified. Gods Decree to glorify a Person, hath the Object otherwise qualified, than the Object of his Decree of giving Faith; it being certain, that the condition which is necessary to Glorification, is not necessary to effectual Vocation.

It is to be noted, That though the divers Decrees have their special Objects, considered or foreknown as diverlly qualified, yet none of them have any Exterior Cause. It argues no more dependence of God on the Creature, to terminate his Volition or Decree only on a Qualified Subject, than to terminate his Efficient Power and Will on such a Qualified Subject, and no other, as it is most certain that he doth. And that hereupon his Decree is not a thing in suspence, hath been already shewed.

16. *Of Absolute Election.*

THere is a Predestination or Absolute Election of Particular Persons to Eternal Life. For God doth decree to give Eternal Life upon certain Conditions, and he doth also Decree to give those Conditions to Certain Persons.

That God doth in Certain Persons effect all the Conditions of Salvation, or that he gives and maintains in them from time to time that Grace that shall infallibly end in Salvation, is

is undeniable by them, who believe that any are saved. And the Donation of such Grace doth evidently prove his Eternal Purpose thereof. For nothing is more evident, than that God Decrees whatsoever he Effects.

This Absolute Election proceeds according to Gods Foreknowledg, I mean the Foreknowledg both of the infallible Efficacy of his own Grace which he hath purposed towards his Elect, and also of the Free Determination of their Wills by the same Grace. So that God foresees no Good in them, but what he hath decreed to give them; and it is also true, that he Foresees that they will use their own Liberty under his Grace as they ought to do.

17. *Of a general Conditional Decree of Salvation.*

GOd doth not decree the Salvation of those that are not saved. To say that God doth decree the Salvation of all, upon Condition, is, I think, an improper way of speaking. There is indeed a Decree, that all, without exception, by whom God's Conditions are performed, shall be saved. But this is no other than the decreeing of the general Law of Grace, and is wholly another thing than the Decree of Election. General Election sounds as a Contradiction in the Terms.

18. *Of Non-Election.*

FOr as much as God hath not decreed such Grace to all, as doth infallibly end in Eternal Salvation, there are some Non-Elect.

Meer Non-Election is no Decree. It is not a Nolition to give that Grace which accompanieth Salvation, but a bare Non-Volition thereof.

There is indeed something more than a bare not-willing, even a nilling to give such Grace. But then it is a positive will of a judicial Denying of Grace, which never takes place, but upon supposition of precedent wilfull sin; and it is a thing much different from Non-Election.

19. *The Non-Election of some, agreeable to the Wisdom, and consistent with the Goodness of God.*

IT is agreeable to the Wisdom of Gods Government, to Decree the salvation of some, but not of all; And in not decreeing the salvation of all, there is no want of Goodness in God. For that any miss of Salvation, it is not through any omission on God's part, but through mens neglect to do their part.

That the Non-Elect are not under an impossibility of being saved, is evident from the Position before proved, That the negation of Gods Decree doth not infer an impossibility of the Event.

20. *Of Positive Reprobation.*

POsitive Reprobation, or the Decree of Damnation, is not Arbitrary; nor is it absolute in that sense as the Decree of Salvation or Election is. For where God decrees to save, he decrees likewise all the pre-requisite Conditions of Salvation. But he decrees Damnation only upon foresight of final Impenitence, or dying in a state of sin; but that Impenitence or sinful state he doth not decree.

Indeed the Obduration, that is Judicial, God decrees, yet not Arbitrarily, but upon Foresight of mens Voluntary Impenitence and Hardness. And in this Judicial Obduration, I do not mean that God decrees the penal sin it self, but his own Righteous Judgment, upon which the sin follows.

There is no Positive Decree that Few shall be Converted, only the Conversion of the greater number is not decreed.

Nor doth God Decree the Salvation of men upon such Conditions, as make the Salvation of most men impossible; but the Conditions of being saved are such as do abundantly testifie the Goodness of God in the salvability of men in general.

21. *In*

21. *In what ſenſe God is ſaid to Will the Converſion and Salvation of all.*

THe Converſion and Salvation of men is ſincerely deſigned in Gods Publick Declarations and Propoſals, as the neareſt and proper End thereof.

That they ſhould turn and live is pleaſing to his Will by a ſimple complacency; and he hath no complacence in their Sin, nor in their damnation, as in it ſelf conſidered.

He is ſo far willing of the Event, as that he doth moſt earneſtly and ſtrictly command it, and perſwade it by moſt powerful and gracious Motives, and gives ſuch a meaſure of help, as will make them happy, if they make uſe of it; and leaves them without excuſe, if they do it not. And nothing is lacking on his Part, that is meet for him to do towards it, in point of Juſtice or Grace.

But it is certain that he doth not ſimply and abſolutely Will the Event, that never comes to paſs. Nor is it congruous to his Government of men in their ſtate of tryal, in order to a Future State of Recompence, that he ſhould abſolutely Will the Event of all that he commands to be done.

Nevertheleſs Gods will is effectual to that which he willeth, ſo far as he willeth it. His will of the Event is always effectual, as to the Event. His Will of Command, Counſel, and Perſwaſion is always effectual as to the making of Duty, and to the unfeigned ſignification of his Grace towards men, and of his ſimple Complacence in their Happineſs.

PART II.

Of the Operations of God about the Actions of Men.

1. *God is the Cauſe of all Good.*

AS there is a Divine Decree, ſo there is a Divine Efficience of all the Good, as well Moral as Phyſical, as well of common as of ſaving Grace, that ever comes to paſs. It is the perfection of God, as God, to be the Author of all Good; and to be the Author of it, is to Decree and Effect it.

2. *Of Gods Agency about Humane Actions, and the Natural Liberty of Mans Will.*

GOds part in all Humane Acts is to us unſearchable; but this is ſure, that the way of his Operation on man is agreeable to the Nature of Man, who is a free Agent.

The Natural Liberty of the Will is not a perfect Indifferency, but an Indetermination with a Power of ſelf-determining.

This ſelf-determining Power of the Will makes us capable Subjects of Gods Moral Government by Laws. And its preſent indetermination between Good and Evil is not a ſtate abſolutely beſt, but moſt ſutable to a Creature during his Probation in Order to a Future Confirmation.

3. *The*

3. *The Self-Determining Power of the Will is no Derogation from God.*

THat which is aſcribed to the Creature, doth not always detract from the Creator. For much of his Honour is in the nobleneſs of his Creature. It his honour to make a Creature of ſo noble a Faculty as is this of ſelf-determination. And the Faculty and Exerciſe of it Exiſts no otherwiſe, than as upheld and actuated by him.

The denying of this Self-determining Power, in deſign of aſcribing the more to God, is clogged with theſe incongruities; 1. Of limiting his Power, as not able to make a Self-determining Creature. 2. Of overthrowing his Moral Government by Laws.

Notwithſtanding this noble Faculty, mans will is not independently free, but God is ſtill Lord of it, and diſpoſeth it according to the counſel of his own will, and can do with it as he pleaſeth, by a ſapiential Government, without a neceſſitating hand over it. Yet that there may be, and ſometimes is, a Divine Predetermination of it, is not here denyed.

4. *Of Gods Phyſical and Moral Operation upon Mans Will.*

IT is moſt congruous to the Nature of reaſonable Creatures, that the general courſe of Gods Government over them ſhould be by Moral Means. And it is alſo congruous that the Father of Spirits, the God in whom we live, move, and have our being, ſhould have an inward and moſt intimate acceſs to our Spirits in his Operations.

God acts by his Eſſence, and not by an Act, that is an accident in him. In his Phyſical Agency what there is between his Eſſence and mans Act, effected by the ſaid agency, may be above the underſtanding of mortals to apprehend. Some Expreſs it by an inward urgency to the act, whereby the mind is more diſpoſed to it, than it was before. All that I can ſpeak of it is this, That the ſaid urgency denotes no act of God beſides his Eſſence, but it is God himſelf ſo urging or influencing the mind of man without any alteration in himſelf.

5. *Of*

5. *Of Common Concurſe and Gracious Operation.*

IT is moſt generally and ſafely ſaid by Divines, that Gods Acts on the part of the Agent are all one, and all Eternal, as being his Eſſence; and that on the part of the Objects and Effects they are many, and ſome of them new and temporary. It is likewiſe wiſely and humbly ſaid, that the comprehending of this paſſeth the underſtanding of mortal men.

In a ſinners turning to God, and in every holy act, there is beſides a common concurſe from God, as the Fountain of Nature, a ſpecial Influence from him, as the Fountain of Grace. The diverſity of the ſaid Concurſe and Influence is undiſcernible by us in it ſelf, but in the Effects it is made manifeſt to us. And that, which on Gods part hath no difference, is diverſified to us in the Effect.

6. *God doth not Operate to the uttermoſt.*

GOds Agency upon Mans will is not always in the ſame, but generally in very different degrees. For he doth not operate to the uttermoſt, or to the infinity of his Power, in every Effect that is wrought by him. It is true, that God is Infinite in Power, and whatſoever he doth, he doth it with an omnipotent facility. But that his Power is equally or always irreſiſtibly put forth in all his Agency on the Creature I apprehend not. For if it were ſo, it would follow, that whatſoever is brought to paſs, comes under the higheſt Neceſſitation.

7. *God may ſo operate as to leave the Effect in part to Mans Will.*

THat in ſome Caſes God ſhould Irreſiſtibly Predetermine the Will to a good Act, is not againſt its Eſſential Liberty. For ſuch Predetermination is not inconſiſtent with a Self-determining Power, but only ſuppoſeth it to be ſubject to God's Omnipotence. And it being to a good act, it is

a Premotion perfective of our Nature, and to its well-being, and therefore not unbecoming the Goodneſs of God.

Nevertheleſs the being of all Moral Good doth not neceſſarily require ſuch Predetermination, but God may ſo operate, as to leave the Effect in part to the liberty of Mans Will. Otherwiſe a man could do no good, to which he is not neceſſitated. Yet when man doth his part, he doth it not independently on God, but in a total ſubordination to him, and by the Power and Liberty which God only gives, upholds, and actuates.

8. *How God is a Total, and not a Partial Cauſe, and wherein a Sole Cauſe.*

THe Notion of a Partial Cauſe is properly applyed to that which is in coordination with other Cauſes, and therefore not fit to be applyed to God, to whom all things are wholly ſubordinate, and nothing coordinate. Yet ſeeing there are other Cauſes evidently in conjunction with him, their own ſhare in producing the Effect may be aſcribed to them, without Impeachment of his honour. But it muſt be alſo conſidered, that they have all their Cauſation from him and in him.

God, and nothing beſides him, is the Cauſe of his own Act, and ſo far he is both a total and ſolitary Cauſe: But he is not the ſole Cauſe of Mans Act, becauſe man himſelf is a Cauſe thereof in Subordination to him. Yet he is a total Cauſe of the Act done by man, as it is an Act, and of all that is laudable in the Act. For none is coordinate with him or aſſiſtant to him in his Agency. And whatſoever man doth, be it that wherein his Privilege is greateſt, *viz.* the determining of his own will, he doth it altogether as therein upheld and actuated by God, and dependent on him.

9. *Gods Agency is not determined or limited by the Creature.*

MEn do variouſly receive Gods Agency, but they do not determine or limit it, any otherwiſe than the various termi-

terminating of it may be called a determining or limiting of it. And the variation is not of Gods act, absolutely considered, but as variously terminated on men, according to their various disposition. God hath enabled men freely and variously to receive his Influx. So that it is not the Creature, but God himself, that determines his Agency by the condition of the Creature, according to his own Will. And men do not limit Gods Will, but only the Effect, which Gods Agency would produce, if mans will concurred.

10. *How Gods Operation on man is never without Effect.*

IF the good Effect in man doth not follow the Operation of God that is designed thereunto, yet that Operation is not without Effect. For by it there is wrought in man a Power or Capacity for that Effect, which doth not follow. And that the Power in Man is not brought into act, it is for want of Self-excitation.

God doth act wisely, and sutably to his Government over man, in giving him Power to such Effects as come not to pass I mean a Power properly so called, and which is adequate to' the Effect.

11. *God in giving he Power gives the Act, whensoever the Act follows.*

GOd giveth the very Will and Deed, in giving the Power to will and to do. If any have devised this Distinction, that the Power of Willing and Doing is from God, but that the very Willing and Doing is from men themselves, it is a Distinction that I understand not. For, the Act is from him that gives the adequate Power to it, more than from the Immediate Agent.

The Power here supposed to be given, is seated in the Will; and the Will by it is supposed to be fully enabled and sufficiently excited to act. For God to give to will and to do, I cannot comprehend what it is, more than to give that compleat Power by which man doth will and do; that is,

to give man the Faculty, and rightly to diſpoſe the Faculty to act, and to ſuſtain it in acting; and likewiſe to aſcertain the Act by his Decree, according to his Preſcience, in a way unſearchable to us.

Though the power be one thing, and the Act it ſelf another thing, yet undoubtedly he that gives the ſaid Power, doth therein give the Act it ſelf. He that gives the Power of Self-excitation to the Act, and of all other Indeavour, gives that very Self-excitation and Indeavour, when it is in Act. And how God ſhould have an Influx upon the Act otherwiſe, than by his Influx on the Agent, to give him active Power and Vertue, I cannot conceive.

12. *Of Gods Agency about Sinful Acts.*

GOd, as the Univerſal Cauſe, doth concur to that which is the *Subſtratum* of Sin, but is not Sin, *viz.* to the Act as an Act, or conſidered in the meer Nature and Phyſical being of an Act. This is not ſo to be underſtood, as if the Effect of Gods Concurſe were a Non-Exiſtent Univerſal, but a ſingular Act only, according to its general Nature; and as ſuch, it hath no morality or ſinfulneſs

In the Hatred of God, the Phyſical Entity of Hatred is not Sin, but as it is unduly terminated on God. The Morality of a ſinful Act (or if you pleaſe to call it Immorality) is as it is exerciſed on an undue Object, and in undue Circumſtances, and as ſuch God doth not concur to the effecting of it.

To concur to the effecting of the Act, as having an undue Object, Order, End, *&c.* and not the contrary, is to effect it as ſinfully qualified, or according to its moral ſpecification, and the *formale Peccati.* For it is to effect the *fundamentum* of the Relation of diſconformity to Gods Law, which Relation is called the *formale peccati*, and follows the ſaid *fundamentum* by a bare Reſultancy, without any further Cauſation. But no ſober judgment will aſcribe to God the Cauſation of the *formale peccati.*

13. *Gods*

13. *Gods not Effecting the ſinful Act, as morally ſpecified, infers not the Creatures Independency.*

THe denying that God by his Efficience cauſeth mans Will to chuſe the Forbidden Object, and Refuſe the contrary, or to Will rather than to Nill the forbidden Object; and the affirming that the ſinful Act, as morally ſpecified, or exerciſed upon the undue Object, or in undue Circumſtances, rather than the contrary, is to be reſolved into Mans Will, as the firſt Determining Principle, not predetermined, is leſs to be dreaded from the imagined Conſequence of the multiplication of Deities, or the Creatures Independency, than the contrary Opinion is from thoſe Conſequences which really and palpably follow upon it.

The truth is, that Faculty, which cannot act without an irreſiſtible Predetermination to all its Acts, is not a Self-determining Faculty. And was it ever proved a contradiction or utter impoſſibility for God to make a Creature with a ſelf-determining Faculty?

Duely to conſider how much every action of the Creature is from God, and what that is which is left to undetermined liberty, would not make one judg that it doth infer the Creatures Independency on God. Let it be noted, That Action is very much held to be not properly *ens*, as diſtinct from the Agent, but only a Mode of the Agent. But howſoever that be held, the thing that is now in debate, is not ſo much as Action *qua* Action, but a Mode of Action. And be it conſidered, whether in ſuch a Mode of Action the Humane Will may not be the firſt determining Principle, without the multiplying of Independent Beings, when the very ſelf-determining Faculty, and its Power of acting in ſuch a Mode, is wholly of God, and is conſerved in active power by him in every Inſtance; and when God doth concur to that Act in *genere Actus*, and that, which is left to the Self-determining Will of Man, is no Phyſical Being, but only a comparative circumſtantiated modifying of a Being. In loving or hating an undue Object, rather than a due, there is no Phy-

ſical Entity, which is not in loving or hating a due Object rather than an undue. In both there is no more Natural Entity than what is in the general nature of Love or Hatred as ſuch.

14. *Of the Conſequences that follow Phyſical Predetermination to all Humane Acts.*

THough I have a veneration for ſome men, both for their Learning and Godlineſs, who held Phyſical Predetermination to all Humane Acts, as well bad as good; yet I cannot receive the Opinion in regard of its Conſequences. For from this Opinion it will follow, that all the ſin that is done in the world can no more be avoided, than Omnipotence be overcome; that a man could no more do that Good Act, whereof his ſin is the Privation, than he could make the world; that all the ſinful Deficiency that is in the world inevitably comes from the Negation of that Divine Efficience, which is abſolutely neceſſary to prevent it; that the Covenant made with *Adam* in innocence, and all the Laws of God that have been violated, were impoſſible to be obſerved; that when God hath Neceſſitated the Violation of his Law, he Puniſheth that Violation with Everlaſting Puniſhments.

I do not charge thoſe that held the Opinion, but the Opinion it ſelf, with theſe Conſequences. And in this caſe, to ſay that man ſins Voluntary and upon Choice, and therefore deſervedly incurs the Puniſhment, is but to put off a very harſh matter with fair words. For if it be a Choice, it is ſuch a Choice as is made under an Invincible Neceſſitation. And if this be not to ſin under a meer Natural Neceſſity of ſinning, what is?

15. *Whether God doth Cauſe ſin as it is a Puniſhment.*

THat God doth puniſh ſin with ſin, is undeniably evident from the Scripture; he puniſheth Voluntary Hardneſs of heart with Judicial Hardneſs. Nevertheleſs, though to Puniſh be Gods Act, yet he doth not properly cauſe the penal ſin; but in his Righteous Judgment he denies to give that help

of

of Grace, which is needful to keep a man from such sin, and which is forfeited by the abuse of Grace already received; He doth also justly expose the sinner to more and greater Temptations. Hereupon the sin, which is the Punishment of former sin, certainly follows. But there is no Causation or Agency of God to the effecting of the sin; only by his Righteous Judgment it is ordered to be a Punishment of former sin.

16. *Sin doth not necessarily follow the permission of it.*

IF the Humane Will had been bent to sin by a Natural Inclination, as the fire burns, sin must have necessarily followed upon the permission of it. But first man sinned with Freedom and Choice, and without any previous inclination to it, and therefore the bare Permission of it, which is no more than a Non-prevention, doth not infer a Necessity of sinning. Nor did it causally ascertain the Event of sin. For it hath no Causation in it.

Yea, the first man sinned not only by Free Choice, and without a Previous Inclination to it, but also against a Holy Inclination to Obedience, called Original Righteousness. This holy Inclination, though it was not so natural, as burning is to fire, that is, naturally inseparable, yet it was necessary to Humane Nature in its right state, and as it first came out of its Makers Hands; and under the Necessary Influence of God, which was with him, it was so fully sufficient to his Perseverance in that state, that his sin was a matter of inexcusable Ingratitude, and high Contempt of the Divine Goodness towards him.

In the state of Fallen Nature the Will hath lost its Freedom to acts conformable to Gods Law, and is enslaved to sin. And while God permits him to abide in this state, man sinneth Necessarily; yet not by reason of Gods Permission, but his own Vicious Inclination. This Necessity of Sinning is not purely Natural but Moral, which is also Voluntary, being from no other Cause, than the obstinate Depravedness of the Will it self, which is not to be conquered by its own Power.

Power. Moreover, it is not a Neceſſity of the very particular ſins which men run into, as if they were inevitabe. For ordinarily the particular ſinful deeds committed might be forborn, and the Duties omitted might be performed, as to the outward deed. But the meaning is, whatſoever an unrenewed perſon doth, hath neceſſarily, in the manner of it, a diſconformity to Gods Law. A Corrupt Tree cannot bring forth Good Fruit.

PART

PART III.

Of the Operations of Divine Grace.

1. *What is signified by Divine Grace.*

FOr the clearer understanding of all Points to be discussed touching Divine Grace, it is requisite that the meaning of Grace in general, and of all the kinds thereof, be explained.

By Divine Grace in general is understood, whatsoever is graciously vouchsafed on Gods part, in order to mans Duty and Felicity, whether it be the Divine Operation or the Effect hereof in man. Sometimes men call the first saving Operation of God to the renewing of the Soul, by the name of the First Grace; but it is not so indeed. For abundant and manifold Grace is vouchsafed before that. Whatsoever is from God over and above Humane Nature, and Faculties, and his general concurse, in themselves considered, is to be comprehended under this Term.

Nature, and Gods upholding thereof, in it self considered, is not to be called Grace; but Gods reprieving of Nature, in order to its recovery, is his Grace through-Christ; and so the continuing of our Reason and Free Will, and all our Faculties in this state of Tryal, is of Grace. And Nature, in it self considered, is the Subject that Grace works upon. For Grace doth not put into us any such thing as we call a Natu-

Natural Faculty, but the Rectitude of the Faculty, or that which tends thereunto. And all the degrees of the healing and restoring of our depraved lapsed Nature, are so many degrees of Grace obtained for us by Christ. In sum, under Divine Grace, in general, may be comprehended Gods Ordinances, Providences, secret Influences, and Eternal Purposes, or the gracious Effects and Consequents thereof in man.

2. *The meaning of some Distinctions of Grace, that are commonly used.*

THere is Grace Objective and Subjective. By Objective Grace is meant the Law or Covenant of Grace, which is stiled in Scripture, *the Grace of God that bringeth salvation*, together with all the external Signs and Evidences thereof, either in the Works of God and the course of his Providence towards Mankind, or in his written Word. By Subjective Grace is meant all internal gracious operations of God on man, over and above his general concurse, together with the impression and disposition made thereby in the Soul.

There is Grace Common and Special. By Common Grace many understand that which is common, not to all, but to more than the Elect; and by Special Grace that which is peculiar to the Elect, or to a state of Salvation. But these terms are not necessarily restrained to this meaning. For there is a common Grace, not only as given to more than the Elect, but as given to all men. And there is a Special Grace, wherein God freely favours one man more than another, and yet it may be below that which is peculiar to a state of Salvation.

Grace of the same kind may be considered as given to several persons in equal or unequal measure.

There is also Grace Sufficient and Grace Effectual. Sufficient Grace is that, by which we can do the Good, to which it is said to be sufficient, and without which we cannot do it; and therefore it is also called Necessary Grace. Effectual Grace is that, which, as such, doth take Effect, and is never frustrate.

3. *Of*

3. *Of Universal Grace.*

I Think the Notion of Grace ought not to be restrained to Favours or Benefits vouchsafed to some and not to others; but whatsoever God gives, which in his Justice according to the Law of Works he might refuse to give, is truly called Grace, though it be given to all. And the most Common Grace is so far of free-choice, as that God might justly have refused to give it.

That there is an universal Objective Grace, appears by the general Law of Grace, or the Conditional Grant of Life and Salvation to all Mankind.

The Grace of the external Signes and Evidences of the said General Grant is likewise Universal in some degree. For in the course of Gods Providence towards Mankind, his mercy to sinners is very legible, particularly his Reconcileableness to them upon their Repentance. The Mercy of God towards men in general tends to lead them to Repentance, and seeking after God. *Act.* 17. 27. And this supposeth God to be reconcileable, otherwise there were no ground for Repentance.

If there be such Universal Objective Grace, what hinders that there should not be Universal Subjective Grace proportionable thereunto? *viz.* some Help from God to dispose the Minds of Men to own and accept his Mercy, and to seek to be reconciled to him. Yea, I think that the former is in vain without the latter, because it cannot be made use of. So far am I from apprehending that Universal Grace is a repugnancy.

It may be further noted, That in this Universal Grace, that Notion of Free-choice in preferring one before another, takes place so far, as that it is vouchsafed only to Fallen Men and not to Angels.

4. Every one hath a Stock of Divine Help to be improved.

SOme help of Divine Grace is given to all, more especially to all those, who live under the Revelation of the Gospel; and this is to be made use of by all in order to their spiritual recovery. The Divine Help already given is a Talent that may be improved for the obtaining of more Help. The diligent using of Gods appointed Means of Grace, is a part of the improving of Divine Help already received. The exercise of present strength in doing good and shunning Evil, and stirring up of every Gift and Indowment given us of God, is another part of improving Divine Help.

This improving of the Help of Grace already received is the ordinary way of obtaining more, and none have any ground to expect it otherwise, whatever God may do as a free Benefactor and Arbitrary Disposer of his own Gifts.

I see no Heresie in saying that God will not deny more Help to him, who doth what in him lies from the Help already given. If we suppose that those words of our Saviour, [*To him that hath shall be given*] are to be understood only in *eodem genere*, even then he that improves the more Common or Preparatory Grace, shall receive more in that kind, and he that improves Renewing Grace, shall receive more in that kind.

Many do not improve the Divine Help already received, and they do not attain to that more abundant Help, that would enable them to do Actions savingly good, because they are wanting to themselves. A Price is put into the Hand of a Fool for the gaining of Wisdom, and he hath no heart to it. So that men perish for the neglect and abuse of those Helps which they have received, and for want of those further Helps which they have resisted and rejected.

5. Of Grace ſufficient to that Good which is not Effected by it.

THat is ſufficient Grace, which gives a Power, properly ſo called, that is to ſay, an adequate Power to that Good, which ſhould be effected by it. A Phyſical without a Moral Power, that is, a Natural Faculty without a due diſpoſedneſs, and much more with an obſtinate depravedneſs, is not an adequate Power to a morally good Act, that is, to an Act conformable to Gods Law. But he hath a Power adequate to a good Act, who is able to move his Will to it, and to bring it forth without the addition of more Power, or more antecedent Help of Grace, and whoſe indiſpoſition to it, or diſpoſition to the contrary, is no other, but what may be, and ſometimes is overcome by that Power.

The Grace, that gives the Power here deſcribed, is rightly called ſufficient Grace. The exiſtence of this Grace doth well conſiſt with theſe Principles, that God is the Author of all Good, as well Moral as Phyſical; and that there is a Divine Predefinition and Efficience of all the Good that ever comes to paſs. But it ſuppoſeth alſo, that all Moral Good doth not depend on Gods Phyſical Predetermination, or Neceſſitating Premotion of Mans Will thereunto, but that good Acts may be effected without the ſaid Predetermination or Premotion.

If there be no ſuch Divine Grace or Help, as is ſufficient to ſome Good, which is not effected by it, then no man hath or ever had a Power, properly ſo called, to do more Good than he doth, and to avoid more Evil than he doth, for lack of further Neceſſary Help from God. And if no man hath or ever had Power to do more Good, or to avoid more Evil than he doth, for lack of ſomething to be given him of God, as cauſally neceſſary thereunto, then all ſin of Omiſſion and Commiſſion is reſolved at leaſt into Gods Non-Volition and Non-efficience, as the prime Reaſon thereof, in the Negation of his Neceſſary Help.

Though Gods Providence towards his Rational Creatures be a Depth unfadomable, yet who would easily admit such a Position, the evident Consequence whereof will be the resolving of all sin into the Will of God? Nor may that be admitted for the only way of Divine Efficience on Mans Will, the continued existence whereof is repugnant to the Wills defectibility, and the Negation whereof infers a Necessity of its Defection, and so brings all its Acts under a Kind of Fatality. I doubt not but God hath afforded us so much light into his mysterious ways, as to clear them from any such Consequences.

6. *Some undeniable Instances of Grace sufficient.*

THat *Adam* had Divine Help, and a Moral Power sufficient to his Perseverance, though he did not persevere, must be granted, or else it will follow, that God antecedently to his Fall was wanting to him in Necessaries, and that he fell, because he had not Power to stand, which Consequence is intolerable. His *posse stare si vellet*, could be no less than a *posse velle stare*.

Whether *Adam's* Original Righteousness were to be called Natural or Supernatural, it makes no difference in our Inquiry. For most certainly it was the Gift of God, and his Workmanship, and it was upheld in him, while it remained, by God's Conserving Influence; and God gave him that Inherent Rectitude, and that assistant Influence which was sufficient for him. And though it was not remedying Grace, which is proper to fallen man, yet it was Divine Help, which sufficeth to the point here in question. And it may be properly called Grace, because it came from God, not as the Fountain of Nature only, but of Grace.

It is more than can be proved, that *Adam* had not that Assistant Grace, and that Power, which had the same proportion for his perseverance, with that Grace and Power, which the Elect Angels had for their Perseverance before their Confirmation. Yea, it cannot be proved that the Elect Angels had more Help of Grace from God before their Confirmation, than

than the Reprobate Angels had before their Fall. But how ever it be, the Reprobate Angels unqueſtionably had ſufficient.

Regenerate perſons have that Help of Grace, whereby they are enabled to do more Good in the Saving Kind, than they do. And the unregenerate have that Help of a moer Common Grace, whereby they may do more Good in the Common Kind, than they do. Both Regenerate and Unregenerate have not only a Phyſical but a Moral and adequate Power to many good Acts of Saving or Common Grace, which are not done.

In the aforeſaid Inſtances it is to be noted, that the ſufficient Grace is *efficax ad poſſe*; and in this regard that Rule, *poſita cauſa in actu ſequitur effectus*, is not here gainſaid. For ſufficient Grace, where the good Act doth not follow, is *cauſa in actu* only of the *poſſe* or moral Power, which Effect exiſts, and ſo the Operation is not without Effect. And the good Act doth not follow, becauſe the Moral Power given by ſufficient Grace is in act of Exiſtence only, but not of Cauſation.

7. *Of Grace ſufficient to Converſion that doth not effect it.*

THat grace may be ſufficient for one, which is not ſufficient for another. And that is properly Grace ſufficient to Converſion, which is thereunto ſufficient, with reſpect to the perſons particular condition and neceſſity.

There may be Grace ſufficient to certain Acts tending to Converſion, which is not immediately ſufficient to Converſion it ſelf. And there may be grace ſufficient to Acts more remotely, and in a lower degree tending to Converſion, which is not ſufficient to acts more nearly, and in a higher degree tending to it.

Grace ſufficient to an Act tending to Converſion may be called grace mediately ſufficient thereunto. And if ſo be, that, upon the improvement of it, more grace from time to time gradually follow, it may end in Grace immediately ſufficient.

If

If Grace immediately ſufficient were given to *Adam* for his Perſeverance, which did not effect it, if the like be given to the Regenerate, whereby they are enabled to do more good in the ſaving kind than they do, and to the unregenerate alſo, whereby they may do more good in the Common Kind than they do, I diſcern no Reaſon why there may not alſo be Grace immediately ſufficient to Converſion, which doth not effect it.

I grant, that a ſinners Converſion may be an Effect of greater grace, than *Adam's* Perſeverance would have been, and than the good Acts of the Regenerate are. For there was in *Adam*, and there is in the Regenerate an active holy Principle or Diſpoſition. I grant, that Man in his fallen ſtate doth need a change of the Will, which *Adam* before his fall did not, and the Regenerate do not need. But this Change of the will is no other than Converſion it ſelf. And why there may not be ſufficient grace to change the Will, when it is not changed, I cannot diſcern. If any ſhall ſay there is no ſuch Grace, he ought to prove it from the Evidence of Scripture, or from the impoſſibility of the thing.

8. *Whether the Holy Habit be effected before the firſt Act of turning to God.*

IT may be objected, That the effecting of the Habit, Inclination, or Principle in the Soul, wherein man is meerly paſſive, is firſt in order of Nature, and the Soul's act of turning to God, is conſequent to it. And conſequently there can be no Sufficient Grace to Converſion, but that which doth effect it, and no man hath a Power to turn to God before the Holy Principle is infuſed.

To this I anſwer, That this Hypotheſis (to ſay the leaſt) is unneceſſary and unproved. In what the Nature of a Habit doth conſiſt is not eaſy to be underſtood, as whether it be the firmneſs and vigor of the natural Faculty to ſuch acts, or a ſecret inperceptible conſtant act in the ſoul. But whether it be the one or the other, there is no reaſon, why it muſt needs go before the act. I apprehend that the Act of turning

turning to God is before that Holy Habit or fixed Principle which is called the New Nature; at leaſt that it may be ſo, and that moſt ordinarily. This way is more congruous to Gods Means of Converſion, which work in the Nature of Moral Cauſes, that do not immediately beget the Habit, but the holy act or acts, and the habit by the mediation thereof. And in this caſe the influx and impreſs of Divine Grace is inſtead of the holy habit. And the habit may be ſaid to be infuſed, when the Spirit of God doth excite the ſoul to the act, and by that act or acts bring it to a ſetled habit. Any other way of infuſing habits, I confeſs, I am not able to apprehend.

If the Will doth, without a precedent habit, move to a ſpiritual good by the influx of the Holy ſpirit, it doth not follow, that a man moves without a Principle, meerly by an extrinſick agency. For the Will it ſelf, excited by Divine Grace, is an intrinſick principle of Motion. As a man moves himſelf by the locomotive faculty, ſo he wills the Object by the volitive faculty; and the act of Converſion is not by Gods extrinſick agency alone, but alſo by an intrinſick Principle, the will it ſelf.

It is not neceſſary that the Will of a drunkard be habitually changed from drunkenneſs to ſobriety, before any acts of ſobriety can be performed by him. And though there be a greater change in ſanctifying than in civilizing a man, yet as a civil or common act may precede a habit, ſo may a holy act.

If a man may commit a ſinful act, without a previous ſinful Habit, as *Adam* did, and that from the intrinſick Principle of his own Free Will, why may he not by the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace bring forth a Holy Act, without a previous Holy Habit?

9. *The actual Prevalence of ſin doth not gainſay the Sufficiency of Grace.*

WHen mans evil Inclination hinders the good Effect that might come to paſs through Divine Grace, it is not becauſe the evil Inclination is in it ſelf ſtronger than the

the Grace, which we call ſufficient, but becauſe the Will makes not uſe of that ſufficient help. In this caſe the Will is not ſo far weak or obnoxious to depraved Inclination, but that by the aſſiſtance of the Grace given it might prevail againſt it, and effect the Good that is deſigned in that Aſſiſtance. God giveth ſufficient Help, and they to whom it is given, neglect it, and give way to the prevalence of Corruption, which might have been overpower'd by it. Though none will ſay that Medicaments are Sufficient, which are not Effectual when they are duly applied; yet ſufficient Medicaments when not duly applied, may prove uneffectual.

If it be objected, That the will it ſelf reſiſts the Divine Help that is given, and as ſtronger than it overcomes it: I anſwer, that which is here called Reſiſtance is not the Wills reaction upon the Divine Help, or a breaking of its force; but it is partly its wilful averſneſs from making uſe of that Help, and its not acting according to it, and partly its willful rejecting of it, and hardening it ſelf againſt it. In the mean time the ſaid Divine Help is in its full force and vertue, and ſufficient to the deſigned Good, and ſo remains, till God withdraws it in his juſt indignation againſt the ſinners wilful neglect and abuſe of it.

10. *Equal Grace is not given to all, whoſe condition towards God antecedently is equal.*

THe meaſure and proportion of Divine Help given, whether it be alike to all, is to come under conſideration. In equal Grace there is not only an equality of Divine Influx on the Soul, but alſo of External Means and Helps, and an equal felicity of concurring Circumſtances, which make for that good which is to be effected thereby. Yea that Grace may be in every reſpect equal, there muſt be an equality of need in the perſons receiving it. For where there is more need, the ſame degree of Divine Help is a leſſer degree of Grace, reſpectively conſidered, than where there is leſſer need; as the ſame ſum of money given to one, that is more in want, is a leſſer ayd to him, than to another that wants leſs.

A leſſer degree of Divine Grace in one kind, may be made up by a greater Degree thereof in another kind; and ſo he that receives leſs in one kind, than what another hath received in the ſame, may be equal in the receiving of Grace with that other, by receiving more than he in another kind.

It is not againſt the Righteouſneſs or Goodneſs of God to vouchſafe a greater Degree of his Gracious Help to ſome more than to others, whoſe condition towards him antecedently, and in themſelves, is equal. God, conſidered as a Rector, renders equally to all that are of equal merit or condition; but as a Proprietor, or Lord of his own, he is not bound to equality. For he may do with his own what he Will, and none can challenge him for doing more for ſome than for others, when he doth for all, as much as is meet for him to do. And thereupon he gives to ſome, as he pleaſeth, ſuch proportions of Grace, to which he gave them no antecedent right by his Law of Grace, or any Promiſe.

11. *Of unequal Proportions of Grace in reſpect of outward Means.*

TO ſome the Goſpel is revealed, to others it is not revealed, and yet the condition of them both antecedent to Goſpel-Revelation was the ſame.

Of baptized Children of Chriſtian Parents, under the *Turkiſh* Tyranny, being of equal condition towards God, ſome are educated under their Parents in the Faith of Chriſt, and others are taken from them in their Childhood and educated in *Mahometan* Infidelity.

In a place, where true Religion is eſtabliſhed, and the true knowledg of God is taught, two Females of equal condition may in their firſt Childhood be taken, the one into a moſt Religious Family, and there educated; the other into a houſe of common Whoordoms, and there educated. There are innumerable ſuch inſtances of different Grace toward thoſe, whoſe condition towards God antecedently was not different.

12. *Of unequal Proportions of Grace, in reſpect of Divine Influx on the Soul.*

IF it be ſo evident that unequal or ſpecial Grace, in reſpect of external means, is given in this manner, what hinders but that Special Grace may be given in reſpect of Divine Influx on the Soul, and ſuch ſecret diſtinguiſhing Providences, as are paſt our finding out. And that there is a ſpecial Divine Grace towards ſome more than others, under the ſame outward means, ſeems clearly deducible from the Scripture.

Our Saviour gives this reaſon, why ſome of his Hearers did underſtand and receive his Doctrine, and others not, becauſe to ſome of them *it was given to underſtand the myſteries of the Kingdom*, and to others it was not given. *Mat.* 13.

Of thoſe that hear the ſame Doctrine of Salvation, they only that obey the Doctrine are ſaid to be taught of God, and their being taught of God is ſet forth as the ſpecial Reaſon of their Obedience, and a peculiar Benefit, whereby they are diſcriminated from thoſe that obey not. *Joh.* 6. There was therefore a ſpecial teaching of them that obeyed, different from the teaching of them that did not obey, though both had the ſame outward means.

The Father's drawing of ſome to Chriſt, and not others, of thoſe that heard him preach, *Joh.* 6. muſt needs be underſtood of ſuch Divine Grace vouchſafed to ſome, as was not to others. For our Saviour renders this Reaſon of the different Effect of the ſame Word preached among his hearers, that ſome were drawn to him by the Father, and others not.

13. *A Stock of Grace is ordinarily given in unequal Proportions and arbitrarily.*

THough every one hath ſome ſtock of Divine Grace to be improved, yet I conceive that it is Gods ordinary way to give the ſame in unequal proportions and arbitrarily,

bitrarily, according to that distribution of the Talents in the Parable, *Mat.* 25. without respect to antecedent different worthiness. But as the Lord did arbitrarily distribute the Talents, so he did it according to discretion. In like manner doth the Wisdom of God guide him in the free distribution of the different Measures of his Grace. Herein the *depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledg of God is wonderful, his judments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.* There are unconditional Favours, and in the arbitrary bestowing of them in unequal Measures, God proceeds most agreeably to his own Absolute Dominion, as also to the state of Sinful Man, who can merit no such favour from him.

14. *Of the Notion of Effectual Grace.*

THe denomination of Effectual Grace is not to be taken meerly from the Event, but from the State and Quality of the Grace it self. Now this term Effectual thus taken needs explication. 1. It may signifie that which hath sufficient Power to effect. For *sufficiens ad esse est efficax ad posse*; In this sense Sufficient and Effectual Grace is all one. 2. That which in the Nature of it hath a necessary connexion with the Effect, as necessitating Causes. 3. That which as such doth infallibly produce the Effect, and is never frustrate.

15. *Conversion is the Effect of Grace* qua talis *effectual.*

THere is such Divine Grace, and that consisting not only in the preaching of the Word, and other External Means, but also in the Internal Operation of the Spirit, as is rejected by men, and becomes in vain to them. There is also such grace, as is *qua talis* effectual, and doth infallibly produce the Effect, for which it is given. And all Moral Good, more especially mans Conversion, is an Effect of such Grace, being an Operation of God proceeding from an Absolute Will, that it shall not be made void.

God saith, *Ezek.* 11. 19. *I will put a new Spirit within you,*

and I will take the ſtony heart out of their fleſh, and give them a heart of fleſh. This promiſe ſignifies that God will effect the Change by an Operation that ſhall not fail, and which implies the removing of any *Obex* that mans Will lays againſt it.

St. *Paul* ſaith, *Phil.* 2. 14. *It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his own good Pleaſure.* Theſe words of *working to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*, can import no leſs than his infallible producing of the Effects of Willing and Doing. Here note, That for God to cauſe our act of willing, and ſo of turning to him, is to cauſe our Faculty ſo to will, by a gracious influx upon it, which ſhall not fail.

Our Lord Chriſt ſaith, *Joh.* 6. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come unto me.* Alſo, v. 45. *Every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father cometh to me.* It is here plain, that all and every one without exception, who is ſo given to Chriſt, and ſo taught of God, as is there meant, do certainly come to him.

It will never come to paſs, that he, who receives this Effectual Grace, ſhould continue averſe or in ſuſpence, but he will ſurely determine himſelf to act according to that Grace. The partakers of this Effectual Grace are they that are ſaid, *Rom.* 8. 28. *to be called according to Gods purpoſe*, which is *his purpoſe according to Election*, Rom. 9. 11.

16. *The Poſition of this Effectual Grace is not repugnant to the Sufficient Grace before ſpoken of.*

FRom the former Poſition there ſeems an Objection to lye againſt the exiſtence of a Sufficient Grace, which is not effectual. If Converſion be the Effect of that Grace only, which infallibly produceth it, it ſeems that no other grace is ſufficient to it. And it may be further ſaid, how can that Grace be ſufficient, which never produceth the Effect. To this it is anſwered;

1. That ſomething be Sufficient to an Effect, and yet not produce it, is no repugnancy; and that God ſhould give a Suffi-

Sufficient Grace to ſome, and more than meerly ſufficient to others, is no inconvenience.

2. Who knows but that in ſome Inſtances the ſame Divine Influx and External Means may be only Sufficient in ſome, and Effectual in others? And to them, in whom it is Effectual, it may be ſaid to be formally and in it ſelf Effectual, and not Eventually only; it being certain, that whenſoever the Grace given takes effect, it doth ſo according to Gods Preordination and Decree; and that Decree is according to his fore-knowledg, the way whereof is to us incomprehenſible.

3. That Grace, that aſcertains the Effect, is not neceſſary to make it poſſible. The negation of the Decree of the Effect in ſome doth not make it impoſſible to be in them, as hath been before proved. The negation of the decree of *Adam's* Perſeverance did not make it impoſſible.

4. There is no repugnancy that ſomething be ſufficient to an Effect, and yet never produce it. For if the Effect may not follow in one inſtance, it may poſſibly not follow in a thouſand, or ten thouſand inſtances of the ſame Reaſon. This holds undoubtedly in Effects produced in Free Agents, and to which their free concurrence is requiſite; and that the Effect doth not follow, it comes not from any antecedent Neceſſity, or becauſe ſomething neceſſary to the producing therof was wanting.

17. *Grace Sufficient is not altogether in vain, where the Effect follows not.*

WIthout Sufficient Grace, there is not a Moral and adequate Power to a Good Act; and when it is given, the Good Act is fully poſſible, and thereunto God hath done his part to the full.

The aforeſaid Doctrine of Sufficient Grace, is an incouragement and ingagement to all to ſtir up themſelves to do their part in hope of good ſucceſs.

That the Salvation of the Impenitent was not impoſſible for lack of ſomething neceſſary to it, in way of Cauſation on Gods part, makes for the unexceptionable clearneſs of his Proceedings with them.

18. *Grace*

18. *Grace more than meerly Neceſſary is not needleſs.*

IT cannot be ſaid that whatſoever is more than ſimply neceſſary to an Effect, is needleſs or ſuperfluous. For God may delight, where he pleaſeth, to facilitate the Effect, and to give not only what is enough, but more abundant, and therein glorifie his Wiſdom and Goodneſs. And we are to pray not only for help of grace meerly neceſſary to the Good we are called unto, but for more abundant help, that we may do it more freely and perfectly.

19. *In what manner of Operation Grace formally Effectual doth conſiſt.*

EFfectual Grace is a ſpecial Operation of God on the Soul, by Internal Influx, in conjunction with all ſutable means, (wherewith the Infinite Divine Wiſdom is furniſhed to every purpoſe) by which the Effect is aſcertained. But what is the ſpecial manner of this Operation is not eaſily to define. God can work effectually in divers Ways, and by us incomprehenſible.

I cannot ſay, that his Phyſical Predetermination, or Neceſſitating Premotion of the Will to a good act, and particularly to Converſion, cannot in any caſe be, nevertheleſs it need not be inſiſted on, becauſe by a way of Moral Agency God can infallibly cauſe the Will to determine it ſelf.

In this way of Moral Agency God can put forth an inſuperable Efficacy of Divine Grace, ſo as therein to take away the Moral, though not the Phyſical Power to the contrary. Which to do is not againſt the Liberty of the Will, but makes it more perfect. For an indetermination of the Faculty to Will or not to Will, the Good that ought to be willed, is but its liberty in a ſtate of tryal.

Moreover God can work effectually by ſuch a degree or manner of Operation, as leaves in the Will a Moral Power to the contrary, or which leaves the Effect in part to the undetermined Liberty of the Will. And in this manner he

can

can certainly bring to pass mans Conversion. Who can say that God could not have infallibly effected *Adam*'s Perseverance by such an Operation, as should leave the Effect in part to his Will, or that he did not in that manner effect the Perseverance of the Elect Angels before their Confirmation?

That a thing should be ascertained, to the Opposite whereof the Will of man will determine it self, is indeed a repugnancy. But it is no repugnancy that a thing should be ascertained, to the Opposite whereof the Will of man may determine it self.

20. *Of congruous Vocation.*

THat Divine Grace, which effects mans Conversion, not by a naturally necessitating Premotion, but by Moral Agency, may be conceived to ly ordinarily in a certain contemporation of the Divine Call and Free-will, which being put, the Effect follows infallibly. This is by some called congruous Vocation, in which there is a Divine gracious Influx upon the Faculty, and the powerful Motives of the Gospel presented to it, with all concurring suitable Providences, by which the Will is infallibly carried to the saving Effect, by a free and sweet Motion, without any proper Necessitation.

The Doctrine of congruous Grace is not to be rejected for the Jesuites sake, if it cannot otherwise be discovered to be erroneous. Nor am I hereby compell'd to rest upon their Notion of *Scientia media*; and whether it be any way satisfactory to their intendment, it is not necessary to be examined in this place.

Against the explication of Effectual Grace here given, if it be Objected, That the supposed Grace, which takes not effect, must be judged incongruous; it may be thus answered, that by congruous is meant that which is so thoroughly adapted to the Effect, that it will follow infallibly, though freely; but Grace, meerly sufficient, may be ordinarily not so throughly adapted to the Effect, being not in so high a degree

or

or ſpecialty of Convenience to ſuch a particular Will; and yet it may not be ſimply incongruous, but ſo far congruous, as to be fully ſo much as is neceſſary and ſufficient to produce the Effect, though it follow not.

21. *Grace Effectual, and meerly Sufficient, are variouſly diverſified.*

THough in Effectual Grace God ſo operates, as that the Effect ſhall follow, yet it cannot be proved that there is always a difference, *ex parte influxus divini*, between that which effects, and that which effects not; It may lye in the different congruity of the Means and circumſtantial Helps, and in the different receptivity of the perſon. And it is to be noted, That the ſaid congruous Means, circumſtantial Helps, and Receptivity of the Perſon, are all of Gods own Ordaining and Effecting.

By Receptivity here, I mean not the ſoft heart, oppoſite to the heart of Stone, which is the Effect of Grace effectual, and which is no other than Converſion, or the heart turning it ſelf; but an antecedaneous diſpoſition, which is alſo the Gift of God, and may be a conſiderable while before Converſion, or only in the inſtant immediately foregoing it: and it is a better diſpoſedneſs to the uſing of Divine Helps both Internal and External.

22. *Of Mens ordinary Preparedneſs for Grace Effectual.*

I doubt not but Effectual Grace may take hold of a leſs prepared Subject, I mean leſs prepared even in the inſtant immediately before Converſion; alſo that it may work by leſs ſutable means. Yet I believe, that as in the Works of Nature, ſo in the Works of Grace, God doth more ordinarily work upon the more prepared Subjects, and by the more congruous ways and means.

That Scripture, *Tit.* 3. 5. *Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us*, expreſly ſpeaks of Salvation, and not of the firſt Converſion. And it doth

doth not intend the excluding of Faith, Repentance, and Obedience in order to Salvation, but the Works of Legal Righteousness. If the first Conversion be comprehended in the Salvation there spoken of, yet it doth not intend the excluding of Necessary Preparedness, but it may intend to exclude the necessity of the Works of Natural Righteousness, and that kind of Vertue that is in meer Natural Men, and was found in many Heathens.

As for *Paul*'s Conversion, it is an extraordinary Instance, and may not be urged against what is done in Gods ordinary way. Towards unprepared Souls, suddenly converted, there is an extraordinary Operation of God, both in respect of the Internal Impress on the Soul, and the extraordinary Outward Means. Moreover, none can disprove a more special preparedness in *Paul* or *Manasse*, or other most heinous Offenders, in some instant of time before the Saving Change.

Receptivity and Congruity for *Grace* doth not always lye in mens fair carriage, or more orderly behaviour, or in being less notorious sinners. Our Saviour said that Publicans and Harlots should enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before Scribes and Pharisees, as having a greater aptness than they to close with Grace, not by reason of their greater sinfulness, but their Conviction and Humiliation occasioned by the review thereof.

23. *How the Effect of Grace, left in part to undetermined Free-will, can be ascertained.*

WHatsoever Contingency be in the Created Will, and uncertainty thereupon in the Created Intellect, with God there can be no Uncertainty, no nor Contingency, any otherwise than as it denotes Liberty.

To remove Uncertainty about Events from God, I conceive it is not necessary to hold either a naturally necessitating Premotion, or an insuperable Moral Operation upon Free Agents to all their Acts. All that I can say in this difficulty is, That God can and doth, in a way past our understanding,

ſtanding, aſcertain Events left in ſome part to mans Undetermined Liberty.

It is undeniably evident as concerning ſin, that though God cannot be ſaid to aſcertain it, becauſe he doth not decree nor effect it, yet he doth certainly foreknow it, though mans Will doth freely and contingently determine it ſelf to it. Surely the Scantling of our narrow Apprehenſions, and our manner of Knowledg, is no Rule or Standard whereby we may confidently determine of the Ways of his Foreknowledg, whoſe Underſtanding is Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable.

It is moſt certain that God foreknew the Fall of Mankind, and of ſome Angels, which was contingent in it ſelf, and from no Neceſſitating Cauſe, in reſpect of any Creature, or any Divine Decree or Operation. And if God hath the Foreknowledg of one Future Contingent, by the ſame Reaſon he hath the Foreknowledg of a World of them.

In this incomprehenſible Divine Foreknowledg, and aſcertaining of what is left to the undetermined Liberty of the Will, there is no repugnancy in Reaſon; nor do there follow from it any ſuch Inconveniences in Gods Government, as do evidently follow either a neceſſitating or an inſuperable Premotion of the Human Will to all its Acts.

24. *Mans Will doth not that which is more and greater than what Divine Grace doth, when the Effect is in ſome part left to it.*

THere is an Objection, which, though ſomewhat curious, muſt be taken notice of. The Act of Repenting and Believing is ſomething more and greater, than the Ability or Power to Repent and Believe, and is more conducing to Salvation. Now though the Power of Repenting and Believing be made the Effect of Grace, yet the Acts themſelves are made the Effects of Mans Will, if they be left in part to the undetermined Liberty thereof. To this it is anſwered,

1. Though

1. Though the Acts of Repenting and Believing be more and greater, than to have Power to the said Acts; yet to give the whole Power, which is Gods part, is more and greater than both the Power, and the consequent Acts. Therefore, though in actual Repenting and Believing a man doth more to salvation than in having the Power; yet God in giving the Power, as a total Cause thereof, doth that which is more and greater in order to Salvation, than Man himself doth, who receives the Power, and acts according to it. The Glory and Praise of an Act is infinitely more to be ascribed to God, who as a total Cause gives the whole Power to do it, than to man that doth it. And so the glory of Mans Salvation, yea and of his Conversion, is infinitely more to be ascribed to God than to man.

2. In the present case, the actual willing to Repent and Believe, though it be of the Will formally, as its Act, yet it is of God effectively as his Work. And so in every good Act, though man be the subject of Willing and Doing, yet it is God that worketh in man to Will and to Do. I cannot comprehend what it is for God to work in us to will and to do, more than to be the total Cause of all that Power by which we will and do. And I do not understand any other immediate influence of God into the Act it self, than that which is into the Agent Power.

25. *The Help of Divine Grace is inferr'd from the Law of Grace.*

THe supposing of a matter to be our Duty, doth not infer that we may in our Faln state reasonably expect a Sufficient Help to perform it. It is our Duty to Keep Gods Law perfectly, but Sufficient Grace thereunto is not given. God may justly require of us, what he once gave us Power to do, after we gave sinfully lost that Power.

Yet when God hath made with men a Conditional Covenant of Grace, and hath required of them the acceptance of his Covenant, and the Performance of the Conditions, upon a Promise of the Benefits, let it be considered, whether it

doth not thence follow, that it is agreeable to his Wisdom and Goodness, to vouchsafe them that Help which is necessary thereunto. By Necessary Help, I mean that which is immediately or mediately sufficient; that is to say, either immediately to perform the Conditions themselves, or to perform mediate Acts tending thereunto, upon performance whereof more Help comes, till it reach to an immediate Sufficiency.

Let it be considered, whether it be agreeable to the Mercy of God declared in the Covenant of Grace, to leave those, to whom he hath propounded it, under an impossibility of being saved by it; And whether the Gospel-offer be an Act of Grace, tending to Salvation, towards those that are utterly destitute of that necessary Divine Help, without which their Conversion and Salvation is morally impossible. An offer of Mercy upon Impossible Terms, one would think is no Mercy or no Offer.

If Grace necessary to the acceptance of the Gospel-Offer be utterly withholden, let it be considered, how the non-acceptance of that Offer can be a greater sin than the bare transgression of the Law of Works, and be called *the Condemnation*, or the great damning sin.

26. *The Duty of improving the Help of Grace, proves the Sufficiency thereof.*

IF God had not vouchsafed to Faln Man that Help that is necessary for his Recovery, he had indeed been inexcusable in his abiding in sin, as the Devils now are; but I cannot see how he had been inexcusable for the neglect of his Recovery, if he had been utterly destitute of that Necessary Help. But now Gods giving of outward Means and inward Helps of Grace, infers our Duty of improving them, and our inexcusableness in the neglect of them; and this seems to me necessarily to imply, that they are in themselves improvable, and that we have Power to improve them.

Every man is culpable in not fulfilling the whole Law, without the least breach thereof, because the unalterable

Law

Law of God, and the Power that was once given, but now loſt, obligeth him to it: But no man is culpable for not improving the Help of Grace to that perfect fulfilling of the Law, becauſe no man hath received a Help Sufficient thereunto.

An unconverted perſon is culpable in not turning to God, becauſe the Law of God unalterably obligeth him to ceaſe from ſin: But he would not be culpable for non-improvement of Helps and Means if they be not Improvable, but utterly Inſufficient thereunto. Not Improving evidently notes ones not doing not only what he ſhould, but what he might do, and that he is wanting to himſelf, when nothing neceſſary is wanting. Nothing is Improvable beyond its Sufficiency; and Means in themſelves Improvable, are not Improvable with reſpect to us, if we have no Power of Improving them.

If the caſe were ſuch, that men ſhall be condemned for the Non-Improvement of any Helps external or internal, when they are deſtitute of a further Help, without which it is impoſſible that they ſhould Improve them, any one would think that it were better for them to be without thoſe Helps. And indeed how can they be truly called Helps or Means to thoſe that are under a Moral Impoſſibility of Improving them to that intent whereunto they are ſaid to be vouchſafed.

27. *Of Gods Expoſtulation.* Iſa. 5. 4.

GOd in expoſtulating with his People, ſaith, *What could I have done to my vineyard, more than I have done in it?* this may be as well rendred, *What ſhould I have done, &c. or what had I to do more?* This Expoſtulation is very congruous to the Covenant of Grace under which the *Jews* were. And it ſuppoſeth that they had Sufficient or Neceſſary Grace to do the Good they did not, and immediately ſufficient to Acts tending to Converſion, and mediately ſufficient to Converſion, and that they had Internal, as well as External Help; and that God did for them as much as was meet on his part, in reference to the ſaid Covenant.

28. *Of*

28. *Of the different ſtates of men in reſpect of Divine Help.*

MAnifeſt Experience ſhews that all men have not Help immediately ſufficient to Converſion and Salvation. For many are under a preſent Moral Impoſſibility of performing any Saving Acts, as Obdurate Sinners, and ſuch as are ignorant of things abſolutely Neceſſary to be known and done. Such may have had formerly more Help, which now they have ſinned away. Nevertheleſs, I conceive that all, who have the uſe of Reaſon, may have Help immediately ſufficient to intermediate Acts tending to Converſion, by the uſe whereof there may be advancement to further Help, and a nearer approach towards Salvation.

Though the meer Non-donation of more ſpecial and abundant Grace be arbitrary with God, yet the poſitive Denegation of further Neceſſary Grace is penal, and the Act of a Righteous Judg towards thoſe who neglect what they have received, *Iſa.* 6. 9. *Matth.* 13. 14. yet God may and not ſeldom doth remit that Penalty, and vouchſafe that further Help which was forfeited, according to the pleaſure of his own Will.

Many, that are in a ſtate of Judicial Hardneſs, are not deſtitute of Help Sufficient to many Acts materially good, and to avoid many ſins, eſpecially of the outward deed, which if they would then make uſe of, as they are able, and hold on therein, they might recover that greater Help that is withdrawn.

29. *The moſt hopeful Way of receiving more Grace.*

THough God, for the glory of his Free Grace and Rich Mercy, ſometimes converts thoſe who have more willfully and heinouſly oppoſed his Grace, yet the greater oppoſition doth not make Converſion more hopeful, but more difficult and leſs hopeful, though not deſperate. So far we are hopeful, as we are yielding to God. The gradual progreſs

greſs of earneſt Care and Induſtry in uſing the Grace received, is the very Way, and the only ordinary way, by which God effectually calls thoſe who have attained to the uſe of Reaſon.

Even they, who are Converted, do before their Converſion in ſome degree reſiſt the Spirit of God, and ſome of them more heinouſly, yet when God draws them by his Effectual Grace, they come freely with heart and Good-Will. And becauſe there is a reluctancy in part, in the very time, or in the inſtant immediately before the Turning Act, made by the oppoſite Principle, Converts in turning do not only yield to God, but earneſtly reach after him with a ſtriving againſt the oppoſite Principle.

30. *Incouragement to wait on Gods Grace in his Way.*

COmmonly men are forward to venture great matters in the world upon hopeful, yet uncertain Iſſues. Therefore none ſhould grudg to venture their care and pains in waiting on Gods Grace in his way. To do our uttermoſt in the uſe of Means for Converſion is manifeſtly our Duty, and we are ſure to be no loſers by it, which men are not ſure of in their great Adventures and Undertakings for the things of this world. A mans continued making uſe of that Moral Power, which he hath towards Converſion, from one degree of Preparatory Grace to another, will at length terminate in Grace immediately ſufficient, if he live. And I incline to believe that God will not by death cut off a perſon, that continues Indeavours, in ſome good meaſure anſwerable to his Help, to advance towards Converſion, before he becomes a Convert, though his Indeavours be mingled with ſome Defects.

31. *Whether God hath promiſed Grace Effectual to thoſe that uſe Grace received.*

GOds Command to uſe Means for any End, contains an Incouragement to uſe the ſame in hope that it ſhall not be in vain. And if we be to uſe Means in hope towards God

God that it ſhall not be in vain, it is ſuppoſed to be not a groundleſs but a grounded Hope. And every grounded Hope reſts upon ſome ſignification of Gods Will for the obtaining of the Thing hoped for.

If Gods Poſitive Denegation of further Grace be penal, why may not his conferring of further Grace be premial, according to a conditional Promiſe? Our performing of the Condition of ſuch a promiſe depends primarily on Gods Preventing Grace, yet ſubordinately it may depend on our own well-diſpoſedneſs, which is always the Effect of a former Preventing Grace.

The Indeavours of a man yet unconverted, which are not accepted of God immediately unto his Juſtification, may be accepted according to their degree; namely, unto the beſtowing of Benefits tending to Converſion and Juſtification; and ſo may be the Condition of obtaining ſuch Benefits.

It doth not derogate from the Honour of Divine Grace, nor tend to beget arrogance in men, that God ſhould ordinarily give further Grace upon the good uſe of former Grace. For it is not the value and worth, but the congruity and meetneſs of what is done by man for the receiving of more Grace, that is here conſidered. And it is very congruous, that the acts of Divine Grace towards men ſhould not be perfected at once, but by degrees, as men make uſe of the former degrees.

32. *Equal help of Grace may have different Effects.*

WHere equal Help of Grace is vouchſafed to ſeveral Perſons, it is poſſible that the good Act, for which it is given, may follow in one of them, and not in the other. And where equal Help is given to the ſame perſon at ſeveral times, it is poſſible that the good act may follow at one time, and not at another. Otherwiſe whenſoever a good Act is done, a greater help, than that which is given when it is not done, is ſuppoſed neceſſary. And if greater Divine Help, than what is given, be cauſally neceſſary to all thoſe injoyned Acts, which are not done, all ſinful omiſ-

ſions

ſions would be ultimately reſolved into Gods not giving what is neceſſary to the oppoſite Good Acts; which to admit, is, as I ſuppoſe, a great inconvenience.

From this ſuppoſition that the ſame Grace ſometimes takes effect, and ſometimes not, it doth not follow that the ſame Efficience is not the ſame. For as the term Efficience connotes the following act, it is not the ſame Efficience that doth and that doth not take effect. Yet it may be ſaid the ſame Efficience, if the word be taken for the operation in ſe, and not reſpectively with connotation of the Effect.

33. *Whether any be Converted by ſuch Help of Grace, as leaves ſome Unconverted.*

THat there is Grace ſufficient to Converſion which doth not effect it, hath been already argued. And that more Grace, than what is immediately ſufficient, is not neceſſary to it, the very terms do make plain. And if it be not in the nature of the thing neceſſary, that more be given than what is immediately ſufficient, who can prove that God doth always give more, where Converſion follows?

If in ſeveral Perſons or People receiving Equal Grace unto common Good Acts, the Events have been different as to that kind of Good, I do not underſtand why in ſeveral Perſons receiving Equal Grace to ſaving Good Acts, the Events may not be different as to that kind of Good. But indeed I judg, that in this caſe we are not ſo much concern'd to know what is done, as what may be done, and what would be done, if men were not wanting to themſelves.

It may ſeem by our Saviours words, *Mat.* 11. 21. *If the mighty works, which have been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, &c.* That ſome would certainly have been converted by that very Help of Grace, if it had been given them, which did not convert others, to whom it was given. His upbraiding the People to whom he ſpake, as more unyielding to God than others

would have been, doth ſhew that an Equal Help of Grace would have converted others; I mean equal in it ſelf; but whether it might be called equal reſpectively to their need, I confeſs I cannot ſay. For they might need a greater Help than others to prevail againſt their greater averſneſs. Yet this may be rationally hence inferred; That in ſome inſtances, by that Help of Grace, which is in it ſelf Equal, ſome may be, and actually are converted, and not others, by reaſon of the unequal diſpoſedneſs of the Perſons.

Whether ſome be converted, and others not, by that Help of Grace, which is Equal not only in it ſelf, but alſo reſpectively to the need of both, if we know not, there is no great need to know. But I think it is hard for any to ſhew cauſe why it cannot be ſo, and that it never is ſo. In this Caſe the undetermined Liberty of the Will ſufficeth to make a diverſity of the Cauſe to a diverſity of the Effect in the ſeveral Perſons, notwithſtanding the ſame Diſpoſedneſs, the ſame Object, the ſame Helps, the ſame Impediments, and all other Circumſtances the ſame.

Howbeit, none are Converted, whoſe Converſion is not antecedently aſcertained of God. For this, if any thing, muſt not be left to uncertainty. Here it is to be noted, that the non-aſcertaining of an Event doth not render it impoſſible. And the non-aſcertaining of Converſion doth imply no neceſſity of Non-Converſion, but that which is called *neceſſitas conſequentiæ*, or of Logical Inference, and imports only a Certainty, and no proper Neceſſity of the thing inferred.

God doth aſcertain Converſion, by the vouchſafement of ſuch Grace, as doth infallibly produce it, according to his Foreknowledg and Decree. Gods gracious Efficience, proceeding from an abſolute Decree of the Succeſs, is the *formalis ratio* of Effectual Grace.

34. *In mans Converſion and in all Good God is always Chief, yea all in all.*

GRace always takes effect according to the pleaſure of the Divine Will. And mans Converſion to God, and Perſe-

Perſeverance in Grace, and whatſoever good is done by the Creature, which way ſoever it be brought to paſs, is to be referred not to the Created Will, as the *origo* or firſt riſe thereof, but to the Decree of God ordaining, and his Providence diſpoſing the whole traduction of a ſinner from death to life. All Good is intirely the Gift of God, and mans Will doth it as wholly thereunto impower'd of God.

The undetermined Liberty of the Will, and the different ſucceſs of equal Grace, is not derogatory to the intereſt of Divine Grace in all good acts. For though the Will be a Self-determining Principle, yet it is under the Soveraignty of God, who hath the Hearts and Ways of all men in his own hand, and can in innumerable ways, to us unknown, aſcertain all Good Events that are Decreed by him.

35. *Of St.* Paul's *Queſtion*, Who made thee to differ from another?

WHen one is converted and not another, if there be a ſpecialty or inequality of Divine Help in any Kind vouchſafed to the Convert more than to the other, the Cauſe of the difference is clear and unqueſtionable, *viz.* that ſpecial or more abundant Help, whatſoever it be; but if the Help vouchſafed to both be altogether equal, it requires ſome diſquiſition to aſſign the Cauſe of the difference.

Here it is to be conſidered, that difference or diſſimilitude is a Relation, and hath no other Cauſe than the Cauſe of its *fundamentum*, from which it ariſeth by bare reſultancy. In the preſent caſe, as there be two Subjects, there are two diſſimilitudes, to each whereof there is its proper *fundamentum*. The Believer differs from the Unbeliever by believing, that is, his believing is the *fundamentum* of the diſſimilitude on his part. Now of his believing God is the Chief Cauſe, and he himſelf is the Subordinate Cauſe, totally dependent on God; and conſequently God is the Chief Cauſe, and he himſelf but the Subordinate Cauſe of the relation of diſſimilitude on his ſide. The Unbeliever differs from the Believer

by Unbelief, that is, unbelief is the *fundamentum* of the dissimilitude on his part. Now of his Unbelief he himself is the Chief Cause, and God is no Cause thereof at all; and consequently he himself is the Chief Cause of the relation of dissimilitude on his side, and God is no Cause thereof at all.

This Solution is not so curious as plain and evident. In this Case, God giving Equal Help to both, all that can be said by an Objector, is, That the difference on the Believers part comes not from Gods different help. But withall it is manifest that it comes from his Gracious Help, as the Chief Cause, upon which Mans Will the subordinate Cause is wholly dependent; and the praise of this difference must go accordingly.

In short, Mans Will is the subject of the difference on both sides; and on the Believer's side God is the Chief and man the Subordinate Cause: but on the Unbelievers side man is Chief, and God is no Cause at all of the difference.

As for the Apostles words, *Who made thee to differ*, they may be well thus expounded, *who gave thee that by which thou differest?* as he himself expounds it in the words following, *what hast thou, that thou hast not received?*

36. *Special and more abundant Grace may be ordinarily vouchsafed to the Elect, and wherein it lies.*

IT is probable that God gives from time to time a more special and abundant Help of Grace, for the more abundant securing of the Salvation of the Elect, though it be not necessary to make their Salvation possible, nor (for ought I know) to make it certain. I say this is probable. For who can absolutely determine of the manner and degree of the Operations of God? And who can say how much he must necessarily do, if he will ascertain an Effect? It sufficeth us to know that God doth effectually what he will have to be done, though we know not the way and manner of it.

And who can tell, whether this more special and abundant Help, here supposed to be probable, be given always in the

the ſame way, or in divers inſtances in divers ways? There may be in it (for ought we know) a ſpecialty of Divine Impreſs on the Soul; and (for ought we know) the Divine Impreſs being equal with that on others, the ſpecialty of the ſaid Help may conſiſt in more thoroughly congruous Means, and happily concurring Providences, Seaſons, and Circumſtances, all which depend on Gods wiſe diſpoſal of all for the Salvation of his Elect according to his Eternal Purpoſe. Becauſe we cannot trace the Almighty in the ways of his Infinite Power and Wiſdom, we cannot find out wherein the ſpecial differencing Grace doth in various Inſtances conſiſt.

27. *In what reſpect there is always a ſpecialty of Grace towards the Elect.*

WHatſoever equality of Divine Help in reſpect of Internal Influence on the Soul, and the congruity of External Means, and all concurring Providences, may be imagined towards ſeveral perſons, in ſome of whom the ſaving Effects follow, and in others not; nevertheleſs there is always a ſpecialty of Grace towards the Elect, in reſpect of the Divine Decree. Gods gracious Purpoſe of the Saving Effect is comprehended under the term Grace. The Scripture mentions *the Election of Grace*, Rom. 11. 5. *Gods purpoſe and grace*, 2. Tim. 1. 9. And *being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will*, Eph. 1. 11.

Whomſoever God ſaves, he Eternally decreed to ſave them. For it is undeniable, that whatſoever God doth in Time, he Eternally purpoſed to do the ſame, and in the ſame order. Though the Decree of God, which never faileth, doth aſcertain the Salvation of the Elect, yet the negation of the Decree (as hath been before ſhewed) is not the negation of any thing cauſally neceſſary to the Event, and doth not make the Salvation of others impoſſible, any more than the negation of his Preſcience doth. And God hath not diſcouraged any, by telling them they are not Elect: but he hath put all men upon a fair Tryal in hope.

38. *It*

38. *It becomes God to aſcertain the Salvation of ſome, but not of all.*

UPon the great performance of Chriſt in the Redemption of the World, that ſome ſhould be ſaved is evidently congruous to the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and thereupon that he hath Eternally Purpoſed the ſalvation of ſome, is as evident. He hath indeed Eternally Willed all the Good that comes to paſs, and therefore more eſpecially the Salvation of them that are ſaved. It is alſo evident, that according to that Purpoſe, he doth aſcertain their Salvation by ſuch an Operation of Grace towards them, as ſhall infallibly effect it, whatſoever degree of Free Agency under Divine Grace they themſelves have about it.

From how abſolute a Decree ſoever the ſalvation of the Elect doth proceed, yet it is effected no other way in thoſe that have the uſe of Reaſon, than upon their performing the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace. Though the Perſeverance of the Elect be abſolutely decreed (I mean abſolutely in the ſenſe before given under the Head of Election) yet this Crowning Gift is received upon condition of their care and diligence, both to prevent their Falls and Backſlidings, and when they have faln, or ſlidden back, to recover themſelves.

But the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God doth not lead him to aſcertain the Salvation of all. It ſufficeth that his Goodneſs hath made all men Salvable; but it is very agreeable to his holy and wiſe Government of men in a ſtate of tryal, that there ſhould be various meaſures of the Gracious Helps and Means that he affords, and that there ſhould be various Events and Iſſues thereof.

That few comparatively ſhall be Saved is Chriſts own aſſertion, and that it is ſo, it is not through any omiſſion on Gods part, who hath amply provided for the Salva-

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tion of thoſe, to whom the Goſpel is publiſhed; and to the reſt of the World the Juſtice of his Grace is not wanting. They have the Natural Revelation of Gods Reconcileableneſs to Sinners upon their Repentance and Converſion to him, which, if they were not wanting to themſelves, might be improved to the obtaining of Supernatural Revelation, or at leaſt ſuch greater Helps as might be ſufficient for them.

FINIS.